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ing but its theme, an unreserved surrender of the singer to his song. The writer of English verses, who longs to escape from the hot-house culture of the day into the free air and natural growth of all that is permanent in literature, may learn of Homer, and more impressively through Mr. Bryant than any other interpreter, the first lesson of noble art, that simplicity is the richest fertility, and a single eye the best guide to suggestive work.

CHARLTON T. LEWIS.

ART. IV. — MODERN ARCHITECTURE.

II.

THERE is great need of public museums of industrial art. It is to be hoped that before many years have passed our older and larger cities at least will have them. As it now is, Americans see so little of fine art applied to industry, that those who make it their business to study and apply the principles of "ornamental" art, especially so called, find it hard to make the community understand what they would be at. There is nothing to look at, for the student; nothing to point to, for the critic. It will be the duty of the new museums of art, now organizing in Boston and New York with good prospects of success, to make collections of industrial art which will be really instructive. As they cannot bring over and set up in their court-yards much that is instructive in the way of beautiful architecture, as whole buildings are unwieldy, and parts of buildings apt to be deceptive and misleading and sure to be unsatisfactory, let them concentrate their energies upon more portable articles. The application of fine art to building is the same in principle with its application to furniture, metal-work, textile fabrics, jewelry, and crockery vessels. Greek vases, Venice glasses, mediæval carved furniture, Renaissance hammered iron, Persian carpets, Japanese embroideries, Chinese enamels, and the like, will enable our workmen to see what is simple and natural design, and what it

is capable of when free from the curse of imitation and trimestrial changes of fashion. The Turkish, Persian, and Indian rugs and carpets in many of our houses are almost the only familiär instances of good art applied to common things in daily use. The gradual introduction of better tapestries and wall-papers than those of ten years ago is almost the only sign there is of the beginning of better times. Unfortunately these are nearly all imported, and they are unreasonably costly to the purchaser at a New York or Boston furniture warehouse, partly because of the high duties upon them, partly because of the huge profits looked for where there is little competition and considerable uncertainty as to what will sell readily.

It is certain that good designing is impossible to men who see nothing beautiful about them. A born designer, even, is nearly sure to come to nothing in one of our cities, where there is nothing beautiful to look at, except the sky and some human faces, from year's end to year's end. The South Kensington Museum, which would be most useful anywhere, is especially needful to London if London designers are to be helped in any way; for the exterior of London is peculiarly unbeautiful, and there is there not even a blue sky with changing and sunlit clouds. But where there is any feeling for beauty of design and any natural power that way, a piece of iron wrought into leaf-work by a sixteenth-century Florentine, or a panel of terra-cotta bearing a Grecian bas-relief, yes, even a Japanese lacquered box of the better and rarer sort, will do much to develop it; more, certainly, than the modern buildings one sees. Very few of the buildings, and very little of the decorative work of Europe and European America, during the century ending with 1850, were fine or even interesting. Together all the arts of ornamental design were sunk into oblivion, or were saved from total eclipse by the efforts of a few men, such as Wedgwood. The loveliest remains of old art were destroyed, or covered with whitewash, or "restored" out of recognition. It was a darkness out of which we are now trying painfully to emerge.

"The world," says Mr. Burges, quoting some writer he does not name, "has been for fifty years in its working dress"; no

matter what marvels of mechanical skill we have achieved, yet, "as regards the production of really beautiful objects, particularly those required by every-day life, we have been behind most other epochs of civilization." "The common utensils found at Pompeii," says Mr. Viollet-le-Duc, "so graceful in form, so perfectly adapted to their uses, show how art, in that brilliant epoch of the history of civilization, had penetrated even to the lower strata of society. The Middle Ages had not the skill to reach that degree of perfection; but they had a marked superiority over our times, they knew no false luxury, each object answered exactly its purpose, and, however coarse the material, however simple the execution, we feel that true art reigned then among those industrious classes which the seventeenth century, to our loss, has taught us to despise." "The Greeks," says Mr. Fergusson, in his wisest book, "never thought of technical classification of the arts, but sought beauty in everything. It was not only in marble and painting that they found it; the same feeling pervaded all they did, and produced similar effects in everything. With them carving in ivory, casting in bronze, chasing in the more precious metals, engraving on gems, all formed fine arts, in which they attained the same expression as in their marble sculptures; and even the art of forming and ornamenting fictile vessels of clay rose to a dignity with them which none of our great arts can equal. Without this universal feeling for beauty, it is evident they never could have attained the perfection they did in any one branch of art." "The only essential difference between decorative and other art," says Mr. Ruskin, "is the being fitted for a fixed place. Get rid of any idea of decorative art being a degraded or separate kind of art. The greatest decorative art is unconventional, but there are various forms of inferior and therefore conventional art, the general definition of which is that they consist in the bestowal of as much beauty upon the object as shall be consistent with its material, place, and office."

The general agreement among these diverse and individual thinkers upon this subject is not apparent or superficial; it is profound and essential. Throughout their works, and throughout the works of modern critics generally, these truths will be found to be recognized: first, that decoration and fine art are not

logically separable, all the best art having been decorative in its nature, and all the best decoration being as pure art as circumstances will allow; * and, second, that no one of the fine arts of design has ever been known to flourish without the contemporaneous prosperity of all or most of the others. We have only the single apparent exception to this second law, that savage tribes excel in decoration by means of color patterns, while possessing almost no power over sculptured forms. But this disappears when we examine the art of semi-civilized nations, as the Chinese, for instance, where, as color design grows more subtle and delicate, it is almost invariably allied to growing perfectness of form, and accompanied by corresponding developments of art, in which form alone or chiefly is the aim of the designer.†

Power of designing fine buildings will be found, then, among those who are able to design other things. If we take the delight of architects and of tourists alike, Venice, as an instance of what a city ought to be, in exterior effect of its buildings, we shall find the earlier palaces built by men whose power of color design, shown in the things that have endured,—mosaic and enamel, and illumination of manuscripts,—has been well-nigh unrivalled. The middle Gothic palaces were built by a community of workmen who had retained nearly all their ancestors' power over color, and had developed sculpture into something, not indeed of technical perfection, but of the highest expressional character, unsurpassed in this respect and in decorative power by the most perfect work. Finally, the refined and severe architecture of the earlier Renaissance was invented and used by men who were themselves sculptors of the first order after the two or three greatest masters, whose power and knowledge was the natural result of the centuries of

* One writer, whose judgment and whose natural gifts as an observer all must respect, seems, from a phrase or two dropped here and there in papers of his in our periodical literature, to hold a somewhat different opinion. I mean Mr. W. J. Stillman. So far as I know, he has never stated his opinion in form, nor any of the grounds for it.

† The finer and more ancient decorative art of China is wholly unknown, both here and in Europe, except to collectors and students in the public museums. It is necessary, therefore, to remind the reader that the dinner-sets, backgammon-boards, carved ivories, and painted screens of modern manufacture and for the European market are nothing to the purpose.

great work gone before, who were the inheritors of all the splendor of decorative art of the Byzantines, and who were members of a community in which the Renaissance of art and literature was active. Why this "new birth" resulted as it did, and why, instead of inheriting from them their own added to their precursors' knowledge and power, modern times have inherited only confusion, doubt, and ugliness from the masters of the Renaissance, we shall know when the history of the Renaissance is written. To the present writer all explanations suggested by his own observation or by writers on the subject seem wholly inadequate.

It would seem to be in vain, therefore, judging by the past, to expect good and beautiful buildings of a people who are content with ugly gas-fixtures and drawing-room furniture, and whose only idea of superior beauty is — "the latest thing" in fashion. A beautiful oil painting — for such things are produced even now — in a frightfully designed and coarsely made frame, hung over a mantel-piece of snow-white marble covered with carved ornament, in the worst style of modern imitation of the debased art of Louis XVI. or of the First Empire, between two modern statuettes of French bronze, shining with lacquer, of disproportionate length of limb and of smirking aspect, — that is modern patronage and modern knowledge of art. "But things are mending." Things are mending in so far that more well-designed articles are made nowadays; this advance has mainly come of the sharp criticism and energetic labors of a few reformers, — Pugin, Wyatt, Ruskin, Burges, Vitet, Boeswilwald, Lassus, Viollet-le-Duc; it is as yet an exotic, it has not taken strong root, it may be nipped where it is by a very slight frost of popular indifference. In old times of good art there were no ugly things, stupidly misunderstood and designed unnaturally, anywhere to be found. Judging by the past, there is little encouragement in what we see around us to-day.

But it seems to be thought by many that it is unfair to the artists and to the arts of the present day to judge them by the past at all. It is said of every person who, in this comparative way, tries to judge of modern art, and who, as a natural result, judges it severely, that he is despondent. He

lacks faith in modern ideas ; he does not appreciate the advance the world has made in intelligence and virtue ; he is a classicist or a mediævalist or a purist, or, not having sat at the feet of Monsieur Taine, he does not believe in the *Milieu*. If he were only of his own time, as he ought to be, he would be hopeful and confident. Old types ought not to be reproduced ; new times and new circumstances give birth to new ideas, and provide a proper expression of them. *Soyons de notre Siècle*, and all will be well. The critics ought to be genial and ready to accept the new age and enjoy what the artists give them.

Like most popular beliefs, it is true enough, taken with limitations, that modern times demand a new art, different from the old. Indeed, that doctrine might be pushed with show of reason further than its more hasty preachers would care to follow it ; for suppose it were to be asserted that modern artistical thought finds its true expression in music and verse, and not in the graphic arts at all ! Lest we should fall into that error, — for is it not to be true to our century to assume that it is an error ? — it will be well to go slowly in trying to dispense with the teachings of the past as to the possibilities of the future.

What means have we of judging of the powers of the human mind when applied to fine art, except the study of the past ? Who but the Grecian masters of form are to teach us what is possible to man's hand and eye, when trained to observe and represent ideally the form of man ? And it is safe to say that good decoration by means of color is impossible to American designers, in our undecorated cities, without study of the work of Egyptians, Arabs, Byzantines, or Chinese, of the French in the thirteenth or the Italians in the fourteenth century. Not only is it impossible to work to advantage, without some use of others' experience : without a knowledge of what has been done to good purpose, we are no judges of what can and may and ought to be done. Thus if we call Leonardo da Vinci the great master of decorative drawing, — of drawing for effect, — it does not follow that we require every student to draw as well as Leonardo, nor altogether in the same manner ; indeed, a colorist would object to have his pupils so regardless of local color as Leonardo, working the shades of white drapery almost to

complete blackness in the effort to get perfect expression of relief and flow. But still, if one wants to learn to draw drapery, for instance, one must have at hand two or three of Braun's autotypes after drawings by Leonardo, just as a standard of great execution.

In brief, it is only by understanding the work of the masters, be they ancient or modern, that the possibilities and limitations of art can be understood. And perhaps there is no advocate of modernism so ardent as to deny supreme mastership to some ancient Greeks, and to some Italians not so ancient.

Those who judge the modern arts of design by any such standard may be dissatisfied; but it ought to be easy to distinguish dissatisfaction from despondency. Despondency is another word for poor health. There are as many seeming accidents that come to help as there are to hinder, and uncertainty itself to the healthily constituted mind is hopeful. No one who is at work trying to make the fine arts at home among his countrymen, and who has a fair amount of energy and resources, can be hopeless. But to be dissatisfied and annoyed, and beyond measure impatient, that is easy and natural. A shrewd observer said not long ago to the writer: "You will find all thoughtful people agree with you about the state of architecture in America; but it is just as bad with painting, only people will not agree to that." It may not be altogether as bad with painting; modern feeling for form and color finds its readiest expression in paintings of moderate size for the walls of the private parlor. Painting in this country lacks in skill and in concentration, and suffers for want of good subjects, but it is very nearly right in some of its aims. But still those who criticise painting as it exists nowadays are dissatisfied, and have reason to be; while sculpture, it is generally allowed, is *dead*, with a few strong men trying to breathe into its corpse some of their own life.

That dissatisfaction with art as it has been and remains is widely felt is proved by the universal demand of a system of teaching art which shall be very different in its results from what has gone before. While venerable national schools are put upon their defence, and their ways of teaching sharply and ill-naturedly compared with their results, scores of independent

systems are offered by as many self-appointed reformers, — plans and expedients which cause remark for a day or two, and then pass out of notice and out of memory. Nearly all the writers upon art who show some originality of thought are notoriously in opposition to the constituted authorities who have charge of the teaching of art. Yet they offer, amid brilliant and stimulating thought and instructive discussion of scores of topics, no plan of instruction which can be said to be in any way satisfactory. Everything is confusion, disagreement, and uncertainty, with the one bit of knowledge resulting from it all, that in good times of art there were no royal academies nor imperial schools, but only the apprenticeship of the learner in the workshop of the master.

This matter of the education of the artist is precisely the one important matter. The advance in style which one hopes for and dreams of is synonymous with the establishment of a genuine and worthy system of education.

To narrow the inquiry to the subject in hand, if every young man who begins this year to prepare for future practice as an architect could be put into thorough and wise training, and taught what many architects of twenty years' practice would agree ought to be learned, and this not by lectures or text-books only, but by the presence of good models, and if this could be continued, in a score of years the difficulties we all experience would have vanished, the way to proceed would be plain before us, and a future of truly modern and appropriate fine art applied to good buildings would be, we have a right to believe, assured.

That is impossible. It is like a dream of another planet, this conception of a succession of well-taught students becoming thoroughly competent builders and decorators of buildings. Reform on this scale, in this thorough way, beginning at the root of things, it is not the purpose of this paper to consider even, so remote and so doubtful is the slightest attempt in that direction. But perhaps building as practised nowadays in America, under the charge of professional architects, might result in more than it does. The difficulties in the way have been treated of in a former article. One of those difficulties was found to consist in the number of different and often con-

flicting duties imposed upon architects, and the great labor involved in the mere carrying on of a large business. It was assumed that the architect as such was not of necessity a designer, an artist in the usual sense, but that the business of the architect was the discharge of a trust, in the proper and judicious erection of buildings. Such a professional adviser assuredly goes wrong and betrays the trust imposed in him, if he leads his client into expenses not contemplated by him, or even if, seduced by no matter how glorious an artistic ideal, he spends the fixed sum too much for decoration, and not enough for comfort, durability, capacity, — for, in short, what his client needs and expects. The architect's power over the work in hand is generally very great. Most employers are very ignorant of all the details of building, and come to the construction of their own house, or church, without previous experience or even previous observation. The plan is worked out, and of this the owner may be able partly to judge, at least in the case of a dwelling or a business structure; but of the exterior as shown him either in "elevations" or perspective drawings he can form but little idea, either as to the general proportions or as to the details, while of the interior effect or of the decoration proposed he can form no idea whatever. The matter of cost, too, in a building of any considerable size, of complicated plan, and of variety of parts, is beyond the control of the owner, unassisted or badly assisted. For, when he has made his contract, what assurance has he that all the items have been allowed for, and are included in the agreement? It is notorious that even with good care the actual cost of buildings often exceeds the cost proposed or agreed upon. This is the most common cause for that result, that necessary things have been overlooked or have remained unforeseen, or that the owner's ambition and growing taste for magnificence direct additions, the expense of which he has no means of ascertaining. But a competent architect has it in his power to guard against all these mistakes and disasters, and to stand between his client and trouble of all sorts. He is like a lawyer in his power and duty to act and suffer vicariously for his client, but with the advantage that he can win every case. The employer puts himself into the hands of his architect as he would put himself into the hands of his

lawyer ; and he should have as much reason to believe that his professional adviser is energetic, full of resources, experienced, judicious, and honorable, in the one case as in the other.

It is evident, from these considerations, how necessary it is that there should be a class of educated professional men, who consider it their first duty to administer trusts of this kind. That the architects of the better class are in this respect very nearly all they ought to be the writer is happy to believe ; but this class, though much larger now than even ten years ago, is still too small, and is wholly confined to two or three great cities. The American Institute of Architects has for its one primary object the defining and encouraging of upright and efficient professional practice ; and this association, which is a sort of federal union, having divisions or “ chapters ” in Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, New York, and Philadelphia, is beginning to exercise considerable influence in the right direction.

And this class of men so occupied must also, as far as the writer can see, be those who charge themselves with the improvement of architectural fine art. For to whom else shall this be relegated ? As we are to-day, the architects are the only class of men in the community who have studied the history of decorative art and the principles of decorative design ; moreover, and this is the essential consideration, it is necessary that the artistic design of any building or part of a building should be his who, under the owner, has final supervisory power. This is necessary, because, so great is the ignorance of architectural design among all classes of our community, and so great is the prejudice of nearly all master-builders and their foremen — a prejudice easy to explain and partly explained in a former essay — against the introduction of anything new in the way of decoration, that the whole meaning of a design is nearly always lost if its execution is not superintended by its designer. This is generally admitted to be true ; but the attempt has been made in one of our cities to divide the business differently, to employ an artist to make a design and a superintendent to take this design as a suggestion and guide, and to build from it according to his judgment. This has resulted disastrously in every case with which the writer is familiar. Nor

is it difficult to see that it must so result in nearly every case. Even with the good-will of the superintendent, and even if he understands the design, it would be apt to fare badly. But this good-will cannot be bought, nor can it be had at all in most of those cases where the superintendent is a builder by trade, for reasons above alluded to. And for the right understanding of a design involving any carefully considered and delicate designing or matured boldness of construction, some one the equal or thereabouts of the designer is needed; while the master-builders of our great cities, as honest and business-like a set of men as one can find, are indifferent to, or rather averse to, novelties in design, and generally unfamiliar with the principles of construction. There are few builders who know how to calculate the requisite degree of strength or the proper form of an iron girder, or how to get at these points at all, except by looking at another girder doing similar work to that which they require of their own, — a device not always practicable.

There is, then, this one class of men in the community who have perhaps enough to do, even without undertaking the reformation of industrial and decorative art, — to whom, however, the community looks for just this reformation, or at least for the initiatory steps, — who must feel, moreover, that the community is right, and that they have assumed this duty in becoming architects. Well, there is this that counts in their favor, — things are so very bad that any, the least, effort in the right direction will tell, and will be visible to all who observe.

There are many among the architects who are capable of this. If it is true that “for a busy architect to make a tolerable design, he must be a designer by nature,” it is also true that there are many designers by nature. We see among children that one boy likes to handle tools and handles them dexterously, while another is clumsy at such things, and does n’t care to undertake the making of wagons and traps and water-wheels. There are those, among children and among men and women, who use their eyes, and there are those, the majority, perhaps, who do not. This difference is very perceptible among cultivated people, among whom all such differences are, naturally, more easy to trace; take any

half-dozen of the most enlightened, inquiring, flexible-minded men, and, all questions of special training aside, the most marked differences will be found among them in regard to the amount of interest they take in visible beauty, whether of form or color, whether in nature or art. There are most intelligent and cultivated men, who respect the arts of design and believe in them, who have no eyes in this sense, who, all their lives long, wonder what it all means, and go up to a picture from a sense of duty, with no interest in it other than an accidental one. There are other men who, naturally, observe and remember, to whom the visible form and color of objects is important.

Such men as these may become admirable designers of architecture. Such men as these tend to study and practise the arts of design. In great times of art few others than they will touch the brush or modelling-tool, which is the chief cause, perhaps, of the singularly even excellence in technical skill of the large majority of painters and sculptors in such times. But even now this natural capacity must act as a certain inducement upon many of its possessors, and we may look among the architects for a greater proportionate number of men who have these powers and habits of mind than among lawyers, for instance. Such men may become admirable designers of architecture. The greatest masters come one or two in a century; the lesser masters are more numerous, and there are now alive many men who could be what Sansovino, Wren, and Philibert de Lorme were in their times; but there are smaller men than they who could do wonders, helping one another. One has a natural feeling for *mass*; he never makes the common mistake of supposing things to be flat against the sky, as some not contemptible artists paint their trees; he understands that houses are seen, not from one point only, but from all points, not in flat outline, but “in perspective,” and in a perspective that is always changing. And, with little effort, he groups his minor roofs of porch, bay-window, conservatory, kitchen-wing, and stable, effectively, around the roof of the main house. Another is the man of details, he who in the fields picks out the loveliest bits of foreground detail and makes notes of them, with or without sketch-book and pencil.

He, with a good opportunity, becomes a great designer of architectural sculptured ornament, and with his mind occupied at once with the richness of Gothic sculpture in sandstone, and the delicate flow of Italian Renaissance sculpture in marble, and with the greater richness and delicacy of natural leaf-form in the spring, he will successfully direct a score of workmen carving capitals and archivolts of real beauty, — gems, with which he will build. Another will have less of these gifts, but will have firmness and judgment, and the sense to see where others surpass him. This man in our time may come out best of all, longingly as he looks at the work of those whom he knows his betters. He may inform himself thoroughly, and, thanks to photography, surround himself with the noblest work of other times. Second-nature may be almost as good as nature to such a man ; not in every case, but often. In the case of the supposed country house, for instance, the greatest and most exalted powers of design are not called for ; not because the building is small, for there are as few monuments of Lysicrates as there are Parthenons ; not because it is utilitarian, — for the twenty-five-foot front of the Contarini Palace is one of the loveliest compositions even in Venice, — but because there is not one cent to spare for sculptured ornament or for elaborate detail, and the distribution and proportions are in great measure dictated by internal arrangements. Does it follow from this that such a design is easy to make, and that “ anybody ” can make it ? By no means ; the strange power of the great designer is as inimitable and unmistakable here as in a cathedral. It follows, though, that a man who is not a great designer, but whose mind is well stocked, whose critical spirit is awake, and who knows what real designing is, may do very well indeed with the house, however poorly with the cathedral. In a time of great and successful art even, these men do good service, urged along, as they are then, by the example set them and the standard put before them. In times like the present they can still more certainly do well, because they, almost alone, look through past time for an example and a standard for themselves, and because their success is relatively much greater than in the great times. Moreover, a habit of patient revision

is necessary to all who undertake to design complicated modern buildings ; the india-rubber is a most useful tool, and “ rub it all out again ” is the young architect’s most necessary motto. Our imaginary man of cultivation, good-will, and patience is he who will excel in this process of building up a design by slow degrees and purifying it by gradual elimination. Neither do the designs made in this way lack in unity, as might be supposed, nor do they seem copied in whole or in parts. It is the very purpose of this slow labor upon them to avoid these solecisms. It is capable of positive assertion that some of the best buildings in our great cities, buildings that might be named, have changed in the hands of their designers, in every part and in their whole expression and spirit, between the times of receiving the order and completing the work, improving, moreover, with every change. The willingness to do this is necessary to the most gifted of designers of architecture ; only he will not need to do quite so much of it.

There is another habit which an architect should have, if he means to be at all artistic in his work, and to constantly improve in it, that is, the habit of making designs. This is not meant as a paradox ; few modern architects make designs enough. Just as a painter should have pencil in hand, and make notes with it, or even without it, on all occasions, so an architect should be always on watch to get up new and original ideas for the making and decorating of every sort of thing that can be treated ornamentally. If he buys a picture, he ought to design a frame for it on sound principles, and to regret it very much if a picture is given him, frame and all. If he has to bind his ten volumes of the *Dictionnaire de l’Architecture Française*, which have come to him *brochés*, he ought to have some fresh and pleasant ideas about the colors and the tooling. Every room in his house ought to be a study of color-decoration ; simple and effective designs for his book-cases and writing-table of course he will have made at first ; if he ever looks at his copying-press for more than a second, it ought to be to think whether he could paint it more appropriately. It stands to reason that if he builds a house or a church he will hope and expect to be charged with designing the minutest parts of the interior decoration and all the fittings within and without, and with the

selection of the carpets, gas-fixtures (if they are not made from his designs), and the communion plate, or the christening-cup, as the case may be.

Of course, with all this demand upon him for new designs for everything he touches, the artist is not to be excused from making his own designs for sculptured and painted decoration of the most refined and unconventional type, when there is opportunity and occasion. It may be that the duties of the artist and of the builder are too varied, and the knowledge required of them too minute and extensive, to allow the master-workman — the architect — himself to carve the statues around the base-ment of his tower, or himself to paint the figure-subjects that decorate his vaults. It is simply a matter to be regretted privately by the aspiring artist, that no man now can be painter, sculptor, and master-builder, and excel in all. Mr. Norton, in his valuable book, "*Travel and Study in Italy*," speaks of Giotto as "almost the last of the long line of complete artists who comprehended architecture, sculpture, and painting in the full list of their acquirements." Sansovino and Brunelleschi, and, better still, Orcagna, may be named, however, as instances of a class of men who long afterward kept up a part of the old traditions, and every one thinks of Michael Angelo when a universal artist is sought for.

But now, if excellence as painter and sculptor at once can be reached by any man, it will still be impossible for such a man to be what a modern architect has to be. That is to say, he cannot practise as painter and sculptor, and be a successful architect besides; and without constant and daily practice, one does not continue to excel in the great arts of design. This impossibility is so obvious to all who have experienced the matter, that it would be unnecessary to state it but for the attempts that have been made to show that there can be no good architecture again until all the architects can do as Giotto and Orcagna found it easy to do. But this we may require of an architect who undertakes any great work, a cathedral or a capitol, in which the finer and higher arts are freely used in connection with the building, and floral carving and decoration in flat color are used to set off and help figure subjects; he must be what Lorenzo Maitani was to the cathedral of Orvieto, a

competent superintendent of painters in fresco and on glass, and carvers of figure subjects and of floral ornament, as well as of masons and blacksmiths; he must have full knowledge and practice to enable him to judge of each man's work and of each man as a workman, and to put his hand to any part with ease to make his meaning clearer. To draw easily and perfectly, to handle the modelling-tools effectively, and to know how to prepare and use the palette, are accomplishments within reach, and it ought to be required of architects to possess them. The few architects in our cities who are really thorough draughtsmen are helped beyond measure by their power of drawing. A master ought never to have to wait for an assistant to sketch in the figures which line his porch and settle upon the arrangement of their folds of drapery.

But, it will be urged, if the first of the difficulties we found to be in the way was the too many and too varied duties now imposed upon architects, how is the matter to be bettered by setting up for them so high a standard of artistical performance? Let us distinguish. It has been said that the architect's business of planning, and his business of superintending work, are really supreme in the greater part of his practice. It has been said also that proper education, however impracticable an ideal system of education may seem, was the one thing needful. The power of drawing and modelling, spoken of above, should be gained in early life; during early life familiarity with the great arts of the past should be gained. Judgment is not ripe at that age, but observation and memory are strong; let critical power come later, and by comparing and analyzing the knowledge of facts that youth should be used in obtaining. Before the age of twenty-five a young man who is to become an architect should have gained the power of drawing easily with brush, with etching-needle, and with pen, and of modelling in wax and clay, and should have drawn from nature and from the antique, with especial attention to the human form and to drapery. Those powers can be gained and the general principles of construction learned by the age of twenty-five, and two years of time spent in the best architectural regions of Europe, in North Italy and France, pencil in hand, will teach the history of architecture. At twenty-five, then, a man of such average

ability as every one meaning to be an architect ought to have, can be, not a *master*, — one gets to be that at thirty-five or forty, by constant and hard work, — but a well-fitted working architect. And this man so prepared can do, without extraordinary exertion, what the practice of his profession requires; although, to the end of time, the men who can do great things easily and well will be “great men” still, that is, men of rare powers of conception and performance.

The duty of an architect who finds himself at work in his profession without quite such a training as he should have received, is simply to do what he can to supply the need, and to make himself as nearly as possible what he ought to be. A man of intelligence and considerable power of steady work can do great things to help himself even after youth has past, and even while occupied in his business. And in all cases to give as much time as possible to elaborating his designs and to see that they are properly carried out in detail, is a mere matter of course. It cannot be avoided if the architect is to be an artist. Much may be done, indeed, by way of relief to over-taxed powers, by division of labor, either between partners in business as architects, or between the architect and his assistants. Still, after all, it is not as a readier and surer means of making money that this way of doing their business is recommended to architects. The way to do a good business with the least possible outlay of time and money has not been for a moment the subject we are discussing. That way to do business is perfectly understood by many architects, and has its charms, no doubt; but good architectural art has no such fatal enemy.

The second of the difficulties in the way of artistical advance was found to be, that many modern materials and processes of building have proved unfavorable, and that these have not yet been subdued. The way to design a front of cast-iron has not been found; perhaps it has not been sought, though a front that is now, in February, 1871, being erected on Broadway, looks like an attempt at something reasonable and right. The mills where clapboards are made, mouldings of all sections “stuck,” and sawing and planing and mortising done by steam power and with perfect accuracy; these and the

manufactories of cut nails and gimlet screws have revolutionized wooden construction ; but while in Switzerland and Tyrol the wooden houses of a century ago are judiciously and tastefully designed according to the systems of carpentry by which they were to be built, in our towns of frame houses the builders have had no system of suitable ornamental treatment for their carpentry, but are perpetually imitating pseudo-classical and corrupt Gothic details, derived from forms peculiar to cut stone. It is apparently not as imitation that this slavish way of designing recommends itself to the promoters of it ; the carpenter hardly expects to make his wooden village church look like a stone one when he makes a show of buttresses by boxing them up with pine boards ; his idea is merely that this is the way a church ought to be built, with pointed arches and buttresses. It is a type of sacred art, he thinks, which it is incumbent upon him to reproduce again and again. The columns of a cast-iron store-front are fluted and crowned with so-called " Corinthian " capitals ; not that anybody is expected to mistake them for stone or marble, but because it is by following the proportions and profiles of a given order that the designer feels safe from the danger of being called peculiar, and of having his building laughed at by some conservative. And both the country builder in boards and the city builder in cast-iron find that it saves a world of trouble to copy the plates in Nicholson or Chambers. Not only is it easier and cheaper to do so, but thinking for one's self is always very hard work to a man who has not acquired a taste for it.

The way to obviate this difficulty, therefore, is just to acquire a taste for thinking for one's self, and to have it made fashionable or customary to work by judgment and not by routine. It has never been so easy to think for one's self in scientific discovery and in abstract thought, and even in practical engineering, as it is now. The principles of decorative design are not so recondite that well-educated men, taught to examine into those principles and to apply them, accustomed, moreover, to the society of close thinkers on other subjects, should be wholly unable to think out for themselves the different problems connected with the application of those principles to modern building. No decoration at all would probably do well enough, and

buildings rightly built without decoration would not offend. Suppose that the builders of locomotives were always trying to make their machines look like old-fashioned stage-coaches! But locomotives are given a form that is suitable to their purpose, and are far from being unsightly. Suppose that sea-going ships were built with both ends alike, for symmetry! But ships are the most perfect type we have of a strictly utilitarian thing; every line is the result of careful experiments repeated century after century by generations of builders seeking speed and capacity and seaworthiness; and "the lines of a boat's bow are the most beautiful that I know," says Mr. Ruskin, "after divine work." If, then, the designers of buildings were to consider solidity, perfect material, the best forms and coverings for roofs, the best profile of cornice to protect the walls, the right disposition of openings to give light and entrance as required, and the best means of spanning them by arch or lintel,—if these considerations alone were kept in view there is every reason to believe that our buildings would be vastly more interesting and more beautiful than they are. But it is not meant that the designer should keep nothing else in view. Let him be accustomed to care for abstract beauty, and let him be self-trained, as we have said above, to design fresh and natural decoration for everything that can be ornamented. Then, as he lays out his windows and determines the angle of his roof, the question, "How is this going to look?" will always be present in his mind, and utility will be modified sometimes for the sake of greater beauty of proportion, and sometimes sparingly applied ornament will soften or even hide a harsh bit of utility that will not give way.

It is obvious that designing on any such plan as this must be wholly independent of any style of past time. Neither Gothic nor Grecian nor "Italian" nor the spirited and flexible French Renaissance of the time of Francis I., nor round-arched Pisan or Norman or Byzantine, nor any style that can be called by name or fixed by date, is fit for a basis or for a universal guide, or for anything but a stimulating study. If a modern designer can say of his work that it is in this style or in that, he is on the wrong path. Not that the adapting of details and forms is always wrong. A window-head must be

either arched or spanned by a lintel ; and if arched the arch must be either round or pointed or segmental, — unless somebody likes to try elliptical or parabolic or catenary curves for his arches, — and it would be very unwise to refuse to appropriate bodily a window, mouldings and all, if one is sure it suits his purpose exactly. Having used an excellent thing once, he will be twice as competent to do something for himself the next time. Raffael took figures bodily out of Masaccio's pictures. Any really able artist is allowed to plagiarize, for he knows how to use his thefts to the advantage of all. So that the vicious imitation is not the appropriating of details, a bit here and a bit there ; it is the trying to build a chapel as a chapel was or would have been built in the thirteenth century, — in form and in plan and in material, that is. What propriety is there in building a church for Protestant congregational worship with two rows of columns in it ? Churches for this purpose are generally only just as large as they have to be, to seat the eight hundred or twelve hundred people expected every fine Sunday morning. These people sit in their places and listen to a service of which a very large part is a sermon. These churches should be made to see and hear in, and everything should be held subordinate to those primary requirements as thoroughly as in the case of a concert-hall. But a large Roman Catholic church is in many ways totally different in its objects and uses ; if a pure Gothic type answers for this, by all means let us follow it, modifying our design only to suit our materials. Nothing is more delightful than to be able to follow, with a clear conscience and with our faculties awake and watchful, whither our ancestors led.

We come now to the consideration of our third difficulty, with which this inquiry must close ; let the shortcomings and the duties of the public pass, until the architects are doing something like their whole duty to the public.

Our third difficulty was the great cost of labor in America, and especially of skilled labor ; a cost which is likely to grow greater rather than less, and which is likely to be increased by all the philanthropic and reformatory movements which tend to the improvement of the lot of the less prosperous members of the community. It will be seen that the thing is in no way

to be opposed or diverted ; the full force of it must be met. It is an advance in civilization which every fair-minded man must rejoice at, while he will regret many of the steps taken by its promoters. Let as many men as possible share in the benefits of a chance for repose and for intellectual pursuits, and a little money to spare ; those two household gods are mighty for good.

But they interfere sadly with the general use of beautiful things, when they ordain that a solid and simple table, not richly carved though fairly shaped and moulded, shall cost, including material, but not including any manufacturer's profit, a hundred and fifty dollars, instead of the sixteen or seventeen pounds it would cost in London, or the four hundred francs it would cost in Paris. The difference in the cost of building a church with a good deal of decorative work about it, — painted glass in the windows, ornamental tiles in the floors, carved oak in the pulpit and reading-desk and organ-case, wrought-iron leaf-work in the finials and gas-brackets and chancel-rail, — the difference in the cost of such a church here and in England is very great, perhaps as five here to two in England, though such an estimate is of course of the nature of a guess. And in the future, while the number of skilled workmen may and probably will increase, thereby reducing the cost of fine workmanship just so far as to take it out of the limits of rarity, and making the good work of carver or blacksmith or bronze-chaser just as rare as good work on harness or clothes, and no more unusual than that ; while in this way the present exorbitant cost of fine work may be modified favorably for the purchaser by taking off the profits he now allows middle-men, the actual pay of the craftsman will continually tend to increase.

There is but one thing for the architects to do in this case, — to see that their own brain-work replaces so much hand-work as can be spared. In nearly every case a piece of wood-work or stone-work may be designed so as to be less costly and nearly as effective, or more costly and but little, if at all, better. A very splendid interior may be made up of parts, each one of which has been made tolerably cheap by the experience and care of the designer, who has avoided all work that would not show for its full value. Of two patterns of zigzag or dogtooth,

in wood or stone carving, one will cost twice what the other will, and yet seem no more decorative. Even in the case of floral carving, as of capitals of columns, a little knowledge of the work will show a skilled designer how best to give his employer his full money's worth.

Probably there will be no more in the world — in times like the present there cannot be — the splendor and lavish richness of antiquity. Groined vaults covered with mosaics on gold ground are not for modern church roofs, sheets of alabaster are not for our walls, columns of porphyry and serpentine we can have only by twos and threes, not three hundred at a time. Our church porches will never again be carved deep and thick with stories from sacred and profane history, faced with portrait statues and lined with clustering plant-form animals and fanciful monsters. No efforts of our designers will make those things purchasable by church or state, at modern rates of payment. But we can have refined form and delicate color, and endless variety of fancy in the treatment of simpler ornament; and no one knows what might come of twenty years of really unaffected and natural designing, even with those limitations.

Simple designs made by a man who thoroughly understands rich designing in theory, even if he has never had the good fortune to practise it, will show a reflection of the splendid imaginings restrained, the great thoughts half expressed, the knowledge of natural form, and the insight into it which on a more favorable occasion he might show more fully. It is not without regret that, in the future, we shall look back at the magnificences of the past. But it is for men to understand clearly that nothing is to be had in this world except by buying it with something else. We shall pay for the fuller and universal civilization of the future by giving up something, not inconsiderable, of the limited civilization of the past.

RUSSELL STURGIS, JR.